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## ANCIENT IRISH SEPULCHRAL URNS.

The custom of burning the dead and depositing the ashes in urns, appears to have been general in every part of Europe, and perhaps Asia, in the most remote times. Cinerary urns of this kind are found daily in Ireland, which abounds with sepulchral monuments of Pagan times, to an extent greater than any other country of Europe—and the Cairns or *Tumuli* of the Irish are only excelled in grandeur of size and magnificence of construction by those of the ancient Greeks.

Sir Richard Colt Hoare, the greatest antiquarian explorer of the English barrows, is obliged to confess that the sepulchral urns of Ireland are superior in ornament to any found in England, and that the ornaments of gold frequently found in them, are richer and more numerous. He endeavours to account for this extraordinary circumstance by supposing Ireland to have been peopled by Gallic tribes, who poured into it at a later, and consequently more civilized period, than that at which they colonized Britain. But be this as it may—and we do not concur in his reasoning—the fact is acknowledged, that the Pagan Irish were superior in the arts of civilized life to their British neighbours.

In some future number we shall treat this curious subject at some length, and, in the mean time, we present our readers with representations of a few varieties of our ancient sepulchral urns, as illustrations of our little history of the progress of the arts in Ireland.



Of the urns represented in the above cut, the smaller was found with five others near Powerscourt, in the county of Wicklow, about a century ago, and has been published in Harris's edition of Ware's works. It was, as usual, composed of baked clay. The larger urn, which was of stone, was found at Knowth, the estate of the Nettervilles, in the county of Meath, and was extremely remarkable both on account of its material, and of its having sculptured on its opposite sides, representations of the two great deities of the pagan Irish—the Sun and Moon. This urn also has been published: it appears in the essay on Danish Mounds, &c., by Dr. Mo'lyneaux, who vainly endeavours to prove that it must have belonged to that ancient people.

The urns represented in the next group were found with



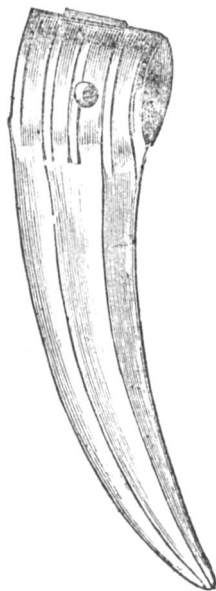
nine others in a cairn at Mount-Stewart, near Grey Abbey, in the county of Down. They have not been hitherto published, and do not, we fear, now exist. We are informed that they were deposited in a garden house of the Marquess Londonderry, and destroyed for want of care.

The cairn in which these urns were discovered, was one of the most remarkable in Ireland for the number of its interments, in which particular it resembled the celebrated Deverill barrow in Dorsetshire, which has been thought worthy of an elegant descriptive work, (London, 1826.) The urns in the English barrow were more numerous than in the Irish one, but they were greatly inferior in ornament and workmanship. In both the urns all presented a variety of forms and decorations.

In our next we will give an account of the Irish cairn, extracted from the account furnished to General Vallancey by that truly eminent naturalist, the late Mr. Templeton of Belfast.

## ANTIQUITY OF CORN IN IRELAND.

The annexed wood-cut represents one of the ancient bronze reaping-hooks so frequently found in Ireland, and which, from its material, must be of the most remote antiquity. It is about half the size of the original.



We shall, though not half prepared, offer a few thoughts upon the antiquity of corn in Ireland. It is a subject curious in itself, and worthy of the most serious investigation; and although the limits of our Journal will not permit us to give many or copious quotations, we trust, nevertheless, that we shall be able to quote authorities so worthy of historic credit, as to convince our readers that Ireland was not always the land of *potatoes*, but the land of milk and honey, the land of *wheat*, of *oats*, of *ale*, of *MILLS*!

We have to lament that bold assertions, without genuine authorities, have too often disgraced the pages of Irish history. On one side, the Milesian must have every thing grand and splendid and majestic;—on the other side, the contemptuous Englishman looks upon ancient Ireland as barbarous, savage, and uncultivated;—to him every Irishman, until the English invasion, was a wild man of the woods, naked and ignorant as an American Indian, having no shelter from the rain, save the foliage of his native oak, or the cavern of the rock, and having no means of satisfying hunger, save only his success in the chase. These assertions are made with as much boldness, and urged with as much force and emphasis as if they were historic facts, borne out by the most genuine historic monuments.

We shall approach the subject temperately, and without any of that etymological lunacy which is justly censured by all rational antiquaries; we shall shew the world that truth is our object.

We are told that Partholan, a *Grecian*, who arrived in Ireland A.M. 1798, brought with him *ploughmen, brewers, &c.* but we do not insist upon this as historic fact. It is scarce necessary to observe, that the old traditions of the Irish deserve no more faith than such as Livy allows to the earlier traditions of his countrymen:—"Poeticis magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur. Ea nec affirmare nec refellere in animo est."—*Lin. Praef.*

Fragments of the works of two erudite Irish historians are still extant, and worthy of the highest credit, viz. Cormac Mc. Cullenan, bishop and king of Munster, who was born in 831, and killed in 908, and Tigernach, abbot of Clonmacnoise and Roscommon, who died in 1088. Before we quote Tigernach as unquestionable authority, we shall give a short description of his annals of Ireland.

Tigernach questions the veracity of all the most ancient documents relating to Ireland, and makes the historical epoch begin from *Kimbaeth*, and the founding of the city of Emania about the 18th year of Ptolemy Lagus, before Christ, 305. "*Omnia monumenta Scotorum* (says he) *usque KIMBAETH incerta erant.*"

The quotations from Latin and Greek authors in Tigernach are very numerous; and his balancing their authorities against each other, manifests a degree of criticism uncommon in the age in which he lived. He quotes Eusebius, Orosius, Julius Africanus, Bede, Josephus, S. Jerome, &c., and sometimes confronts them. He always collates the Septuagint with the Hebrew text.

From the various quotations given by him from the works of ancient Irish poets, it appears that he had an extensive library, (by the envious hand of time long since destroyed,) a fact which no one will dispute, who for a moment considers that he was abbot of the rich and splendid monastery of Clonmacnoise. The annals of Innisfallen, under the year 1088, thus record his death:

"1088. TIGERNACH HUA BRAIN do Shíol Mhuireadh-nigh, Comharba Chíairain Chluana-mac-nois, agus Chomain, saoi oirdhearc in cagna 'sa bfoghlaim, agus ollanb deaghurlabhra, agus fear ro scriobh annala Eirionn gus an n-bliadhain so, d' eag, agus a adhlacadh a g-Cluain-mac-nois."

"TIGERNACH O'BREEN of the Siol-murray, Comharba (i. e. successor) of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise and of Coman an illustrious sage in philosophy and literature, an eloquent doctor and a writer of the annals of Ireland to this year, died and was interred at Clonmacnoise."

Under the year 651 he has the following passage, in which there is a most distinct reference to wheat, oats, and a mill.

"A.D. 651. *Cuin da mhac Blathmaic mic Aedha Slaine do luignib i Molind Maelodrain i. Donchad acos Conall. Guin Oisre mic Oisire la Maelodrain.*"

"The two sons of Blamac, son of Hugh Slaine, viz. Donchad, and Conall, were mortally wounded by the Lagenians in Maelodrain's MILL. Oisir, the son of Oiserge, was mortally wounded by Maelodrain."

In corroboration of this, Tigernach quotes a few lines of very ancient poetry, which is indisputably a part of a poem composed immediately after the deaths of these warriors; it was probably an elegy composed by their own bard on the occasion of their deaths. In it he remarks that the mill of Maelodrain had ground not *oats*, but *precious WHEAT*, alluding in a figurative and satiric manner to the two royal warriors having been there killed.

Having carefully compared this fragment with the same as given in the *Chronicon Scotorum*, and in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, we thus give the text:

*A Muilind cia ro melt? mor do Tuirind!!  
Ni ro coimelt for serfuind  
Aro melt for uib Cearbhull!  
An gran melis in Muilind  
Ni coirce acht is derg Tuirind!  
Is di fogla in cruinn mhuir  
For do Mhuilind a Muilodhrain!*

"Ah MILL! what has thou ground?  
Precious thy WHEAT!!

Thou hast ground—not oats—  
But thou hast ground the offsprings of Cerbhall!!

The GRAIN which the MILL has ground,  
Is not OATS, but blood-stained WHEAT!!  
May thy mill, O Maelodrain!  
Want for ever such corn to grind."

The word that I translate WHEAT is *Tuirind* in the original, which is undoubtedly an ancient Irish word for *Wheat*. Father Francis Walsh, lecturer of divinity in the college of St. Anthony, at Louvain, wrote an Irish vocabulary, in which the common words of the Irish language are first given, and then the more ancient and difficult ones. In this glossary he gives *Cruithneacht* as the modern word, and *Tuirim* as the ancient one.

Vallancey in his essay on the origin of the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, writes the following remark upon this word:

"*Wheat* which grows spontaneously in the northern parts of *Touran*, is named by the Irish, '*Arbha Tuireann*,' i. e. *the grain of Tuireann*: and I suspect that *Orna*, the Irish name for barley, comes from some place in the country of that name. The Calmucs call it *Arba Buda* (*Strahlenberg*) which signifies *yellow corn* in Irish; as *Cruithneacht*, another name for *wheat*, signifies *red corn*. In this compound we find the Chaldaic *chit*, *wheat*; whence the old English *cheate*, bread; *main cheat*, or *manchet*, wheaten bread.

Cormac M'Cullenan, who was born in 831, thus derives the word *Cruithneacht*:

"*Cruithneacht, i. cruith* cech crodhae acos cech derg; acos *neet* cech glan, i. iars, an ni is derg acos is glan in *Cruithneacht*."

"*Cruithneacht, i. e. cruith, i. e. blood-coloured, or red; and neet, i. e. clean. Wheat* is so called from its being *red and clean*."

Aldfred, in his poem, (published in our 12th number) says:

"Ro d'eat or is Airgeadact  
Ro d'eat Mil is *cruithneacht*."

"I found (in Ireland) gold and silver  
I found honey and *wheat*."

As soon as we establish that there were mills anciently in Ireland, it will follow that there must have been corn: our crowned prelate above mentioned, thus derives the Irish word *Muilenn*, a *Mil*.

"*Muilind i. mol acos ond: ond i. cloch: ar issed dedhe is Muilend a Muilind. No, Moland i. mo a ail i. mo a chlocha quam clocha bron. Muilend din i. mel acos lind; ar is for lind meis*."

"*Muilend* compounded of *mol, i. e. a shaft*, and *ond, i. e. a stone*, for these are the two things called the *mill*—or *moland, q. d. mo-a-ail*, because its stones are larger than those of the *quern*. *Muilend* is derived (by some) from *mel, to grind*, and *lind, a pond*, because it grinds by means of the pond."

This is most positive evidence of the early use of water mills in Ireland.

Again, when we show that there was malt made anciently in Ireland, it will follow that there must have been corn of which it was made. We refer to what the same Cormac says of it, as quoted in our 12th number.

And again, speaking of a certain golden vessel, he says:

*Boige ainm ballan bec a m-bidis cuig uinge oir neoch no bhidh fri h-ol saivleanda ass: oas no bhidh din fri gell do fíledhaibh oas do Ollamnaibh unde dicítur is na brethaibh nemhedh:*

*Ballan baise boige cuig n-uinge ban air.*

"Boige, the name of a small vessel, weighing five ounces of gold, which was used for drinking *Saintinn* (ale) out of it. It used to be given as a reward to Fileas and Ollaves, whence is said in the Brehon laws:

"The Boige is a vessel with a handle, containing five ounces of pure gold."

Tigernach under the year 1021 records that a shower of *wheat* fell that year in Ossary.

1021. *Fross Cruitnecta d' fertain a n-Osraighe re lind Mailsechlaimn mic Domhnaill.*

"A shower of wheat was rained in Ossary, in the time of Malachy, the son of Donall."

What this alludes to it is now hard to determine.

That the lands of Ireland were highly cultivated in former times is proved from the marks of the plough being still visible on the tops of mountains, now deemed unworthy of the husbandman's labours, and from similar marks being daily discovered in the bottom of our bogs. It appears from an ancient law tract to be found among the MSS. in the library of Trinity College, that the irrigation of their lands was practised by the Irish, at a very early period, from which it will be allowed that they had a superior skill in agriculture.

We shall, for the present, close this article by giving the following curious extract translated from the last great work of the celebrated Baron de Humboldt—*Tableau de la Nature*:

"It is certainly a surprising phenomenon that on one side of our planet, a people exist, to whom milk and flower extracted from grain-bearing plants, are totally unknown, whilst that the opposite hemisphere abounds with nations who cultivate the cereal plants, and propagate animals that give milk. Thus the culture of different grain characterizes the two parts of our globe. In the new continent, we see from 45 degrees north latitude to 72 degrees south, they cultivate but one species of grain, namely, *maize*. In the old continent, on the contrary we find every where, and in the most remote period which history records, the culture of wheat, barley, corn and oats, in a word, of all the cereal plants. Diodorus Siculus, mentions *wheat* growing wild in the fields of *Leontium* and in several other places of Sicily. M. Spungel has collected several interesting passages which render the opinion likely that most of the species of European corn have been originally brought from Persia and India, where they grew naturally. I have some doubts of the existence of *wild corn* in Asia, and I believe it did not become so till it had been cultivated there. A negro slave of Ferdinand Cortez was the first who cultivated wheat in new Spain; he found three grains among some rice which he had brought from Spain for provisions for the army. In the Franciscan Convent at Quito they carefully preserve as a relic, the vase of clay which enclosed the first wheat which brother Jodoas Rixi of Gonte, a Franciscan monk, had sown in the city. They at first cultivated it before the convent upon the place called the *Plazuela* of S. Francis. The monks whom I visited often during my stay at Quito, begged of me to explain the inscription traced upon the vase, which they supposed had some relation to the wheat, but I found this sentence written in the old German dialect:

"Lethim who empties mein drinking, not forget the Lord."

This antique German vase had a very respectable appearance." In a future article we shall give a curious list of Irish Mills from the sixth century to the English invasion.

JOHN O'DONOVAN.

#### LEGEND OF FIN M'COUL.

In days of yore, Cormac, son of Art, ruled Ireland, and a hospitable prince was he. His house was always open, many were the retainers kept in his hall; and thereby, like more modern princes, his expenses outran both his ready money and his tardy credit; and he was at his wit's end how to supply with meat and strong drink, those who honored his quality by feeding at his expense.

After all the most obvious recipe that can occur to any prince, when desirous of aggrandizing himself, is to go to war with one of his neighbours. The grand *monarque* of Versailles, and the celestial sovereign of Ashantee, have had recourse to the same expedient, and why not Cormac son of Art? Now, Fiachadh Muillathian, King of Munster, had some fat pasture lands along the banks of the Suir, which preserve their credit for fertility unto this very day, and go under the name of the Golden Vein; on these plentiful plains Cormac cast his longing eye, assuring himself, that were he once possessed of such mensal lands, he should never want a sirloin or baron of beef to grace his board. Go to war, therefore, he should; but withal, Fiachadh of Munster was potent and wise, and he valued those very fields as the apple of his eye; and his merry men of Ormond and Desmond, were as fond of fighting as their descendants are, at this very day.

In this difficulty Cormac resorted for advice to a Druid,

who was a Caledonian; for even in these early days the Scotch *itched* after foreign travel, and were every where at hand to give advice to those who could pay for it; and he being an enchanter and depository of old prophecies, told the King that in one of those rivers that run under ground in the western land, now called Mayo, and not far from that lofty mountain, now named Croagh Patrick, there was a salmon, which if caught and eaten, would communicate such wisdom, prowess, and good fortune to the eater, that from that day forth, fame and prosperity would attend him in all his wars. You may be sure Cormac lost no time in setting out on his fishing excursion into Connaught, and attending to the directions of his adviser, he came to the banks of a river that rises in the mountain chain surrounding the reek of Croagh Patrick; and pursuing that river's course through a fertile valley, he at length came to where the turbulent stream falls into a fearful cavern, and is lost, to be seen no more; and whether it seeks by some unknown passage the depths of the ocean, or whether it plunges into the earth's abyss and goes to cool the raging of its central fires, was never yet ascertained; but close to the jaws of this engulphing cavern, there is a dark, deep pool, where the stream, as if in terror, whirls about in rapid eddies, and here amidst multitudes of fish it was supposed the salmon of *knowledge* spent its days. On the banks of this pool, Cormac and his Caledonian adviser sat day after day; and complain they could not of want of sport, for many a fine fish they caught and broiled on the live coals which they kept for their accommodation on the bank; but still Cormac became not a whit the wiser; and after feeding on salmon, firm and curdy enough to satisfy the "gout" of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, he at length grew so tired of fish, it palled so much upon his appetite that the Milesian monarch began to sigh after the fat mutton that the broad pastures of Tara supplied.

At length the fish were caught with such rapidity, that if he got thereby the wisdom of Solomon, he could not be brought to taste of every one taken in this populous pool. And now he and his adviser presumed to make selections; and applying the arbitrary principles of physiognomy to fish, ventured to throw back some into the stream, while others, as more plump and well favoured, were elected to the honor of being broiled; and here methinks the discretion of the King and his Druid was not evinced; for many a time and oft, ugly heads contain capacious brains, and sleek skins fail to enclose shining intellects: so it proved here, for one evening a little fish was taken—a poor, long, lank, spent thing, with a hooked snout, just such another as a poacher spears by the light of a blazing wisp of potato stalks, on a dark night in October. Now who would suppose that any one who had his pick and choice would think of feeding on a spent salmon: so this good-for-nothing fish was thrown on the bank, leaving it to its own fancy to bounce and wriggle back into the river; and just as it was in the very act of eloping into the stream, an idle "gorsoon" who was looking on, caught it by the gills, and says he to himself, "though this be not plump enough for a King's palate, it may not come amiss to me;" so choosing a snug place behind a rock, just within the cavern's mouth, he blew up a fire and set about to broil his fish.—Now it is time to tell who this *boy* was, for unquestionless his match Ireland has not produced from that day to this. No one else he was than the famous Fin, the son of Cumhall, and grandson of Trein the big, who was sent to these shores of the Western Sea, from his native halls of Almuin, in order to save him from the enchantments of the tribe of Morni, that sought to take his life; and here he lived sporting along these wild hills, and here he might have died, unknowing and unknown, were it not for the circumstance I now record; thank therefore he may, his stars, that he was not so squeamish in the choice of his fish as King Cormac: so having lit up his fire, he was not long in clapping his salmon, all alive as it was, on the coals; for, alas, sportsmen as well as cooks, think little of the pain they may inflict on fowl or fish; and thus on the live coals the poor animal was not long, until a great swelling blister arose by the force of the fire, on its heretofore bright and silver side; and Fin seeing the broiling salmon, was uneasy, not at its sufferings, but in apprehension lest all the nutritious juices of